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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Letter dated 18 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, in my capacity as Chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Group in New York, to convey for your valuable consideration the final communiqué adopted at the OIC Expanded Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting at the level of foreign minister on the Israeli aggression against the freedom flotilla shipping humanitarian aid to Gaza, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 6 June 2010 (see annex).

I would highly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 15 and 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 18 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Final Communiqué of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Expanded Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting at the level of foreign minister on the Israeli aggression against the Freedom Flotilla shipping humanitarian aid to Gaza, adopted in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 6 June 2010

The Expanded Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 6 June 2010, corresponding to 23 Jumada Al-Thani, 1431H,

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and pursuant to the resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on the question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif,

Commending the resistance of the Palestinian people in the face of the Israeli aggression, and affirming support for the Palestinians' just struggle to regain their inalienable national rights, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital,

Underlining that the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip, including closing the border crossings and cutting the flow of fuel supplies, food and medicines, constitutes a collective punishment of the civilian population, provokes serious humanitarian repercussions and is considered a crime against humanity by international law,

Having considered the circumstances surrounding the unlawful military attack of the Israeli forces against the international civilian convoy carrying humanitarian aid, that is, the Freedom Flotilla, in international waters on 31 May 2010, which resulted in loss of life and injuries among unarmed civilians,

Emphasizing that the safety and well-being of all civilians are of paramount importance,

Condemning the continued disregard of international law by Israel and its detrimental implications for regional and global peace, stability and security,

Condemning Israel's insistence on responding to all peace initiatives with violence and belligerency,

Stressing the need to respect the universally accepted human rights and norms and principles of international humanitarian law,

Welcoming:

- The United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement of 31 May 2010;
- The statement issued by the African Union at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 May 2010;

– The joint statement issued by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Gulf Cooperation Council Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore on 1 June 2010;

– The resolution of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Arab League, adopted in Cairo on 2 June 2010;

– The resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council, adopted on 2 June 2010, which calls for the setting up of an independent international fact-finding mission on the violations of international law by Israel's aggression against the Freedom Flotilla;

Having listened to the report of the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the Turkish and Palestinian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and to the interventions of other ministers and heads of delegations,

1. *Condemns* in the strongest possible terms the brutal aggression by the Israeli forces against civilian ships transporting humanitarian aid material to the Gaza Strip in international waters;

2. *Conveys* its deepest condolences to the families of those killed in this military aggression and expresses its hopes for the early recovery of the wounded;

3. *Condemns* Israel for this piracy which constitutes an act of state terrorism, and a gross breach of international law and serious violation of human rights;

4. *Condemns also* the killing and wounding of unarmed civilians by the Israeli barbaric assault in international waters, under circumstances not warranting such attack;

5. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Republic of Turkey for its unwavering stance in support of the Palestinian people;

6. *Highly commends* the humanitarian mission undertaken by the Freedom Flotilla to deliver humanitarian aid to the Israeli blockaded Gaza Strip. It further pays tribute and its full respect for those who perished in this noble endeavour;

7. *Calls upon* the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to take all necessary measures, within international law, individually and collectively, to deter Israel from engaging in any assault and use of force against civilian ships;

8. *Demands* the release of the ships and individuals involved which were forced to go to Ashdod port by the Israeli forces;

9. *Further demands* that full compensation be made in accordance with international standards for the loss of lives and injuries caused to civilians by the Israeli military aggression on the humanitarian convoy of ships, as well as compensation for all material damages caused;

10. *Calls on* the United Nations Secretary-General to establish an independent international commission to launch a full investigation into the incident in order to determine, prosecute and punish those responsible for the killing of civilians, as well as attacking and forcefully seizing civilian vessels;

11. *Emphasizes* that the Israeli blockade of Gaza Strip is not only a gross violation of Palestinians' human rights, but also represents a serious threat to

international peace and security and regional stability, as clearly demonstrated by the latest incident. It is a vivid manifestation of state terrorism, serious crime against humanity, and a blatant breach of international law, which needs to receive proper reaction by the international community through bringing Israeli authorities who are responsible for these heinous acts to justice;

12. *Reiterates* its firm and unwavering demand for an immediate lifting of this unlawful Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and the opening of all Israeli-controlled crossing points to allow for the free movement of persons and goods into and from the Gaza Strip and to allow for unfettered humanitarian access;

13. *Calls on* the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to coordinate their efforts with the international community to put an end to this oppressive and unacceptable Israeli blockade, including sanctions against Israel to compel it to stop such barbaric acts and crimes;

14. *Decides* to establish a governmental expert group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in close coordination with Palestine, in order to consider ways, means and mechanisms to ensure the lifting of the unjust Israeli blockade imposed on Gaza and to facilitate the reconstruction process of Gaza;

15. *Requests* the United Nations Secretary-General to intensify United Nations activities in order to immediately and unconditionally lift the Israeli blockade on Gaza and alleviate the sufferings of the people therein;

16. *Renews its call* that action must be taken to bring a halt to all other illegal Israeli practices against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

17. *Reaffirms* the importance of continuing the strong coordination among the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group in the United Nations and other international organizations and the need to continue the coordination and cooperation of these groups in order to ensure comprehensive follow-up of this serious and urgent matter, including to ensure the full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement of 31 May 2010, particularly the pursuit of an impartial, credible, transparent and independent international investigation in accordance with international standards led by the United Nations Secretary-General;

18. *Expresses its concern* over the ongoing Israeli illegal acts and practices in the international waters, which further targeted the Irish vessel "Rachel Corrie" on 5 June 2010 and prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people in Gaza;

19. *Requests* the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in Geneva to follow up the implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution of 2 June 2010, adopted with the active role of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

20. *Denounces* the countries which did not support the resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on 2 June 2010 on the Israeli aggression against the Freedom Flotilla, and deems it a protection for Israel and its crimes and a manifestation of double standards and departure from international law and international humanitarian law;

21. *Requests* the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to take the necessary measures towards convening a special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly within the framework of "Uniting For Peace", in order to lift the Israeli blockade on Gaza;

22. *Mandates* the Secretary General to coordinate with the Chairs of the Islamic Summit Conference, the Council of Foreign Ministers and the member States of the Executive Committee in order to ensure implementation and the follow-up of the provisions of the present communiqué;

23. In view of the continuing Israeli challenge and violation of international law and all its international commitments, *calls on* member States to reconsider their relations with Israel, including reconsideration of normalization of such relations;

24. *Supports* the Palestinian reconciliation process and the Egyptian efforts to achieve this reconciliation, taking into consideration the need to end the Palestinian discord as soon as possible.